

**OLLI COURSE
SPRING 2023**

RUSSIANS IN HOLLYWOOD: EMIGRES, POLITICS, MOVIES

HARLOW ROBINSON, Ph.D.

SYLLABUS

Our course combines three fascinating and interconnected stories. One follows the waves of Russian emigres who came to Hollywood after the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution and made major contributions to the film industry as actors, directors, composers and designers. Another examines the significant impact of the vicissitudes of the crucial American-Soviet geo-political relationship on Hollywood production. Finally, we will consider some of the many Hollywood movies that represent Russians and Russia, from comedies like *Ninotchka* and *The Russians Are Coming, The Russians Are Coming* to epics like *Doctor Zhivago* and *Anastasia* to Cold War thrillers like *From Russia with Love* and *The Hunt for Red October*. Lectures and discussion will focus on dominant themes in a basically chronological context.

CLASS SCHEDULE:

WEEK ONE APRIL 3

Introduction: Sidekicks and Stereotypes: Russians and their Image in the Movies

Meeting Doctor Zhivago
Stereotypes in Film
Historical Overview
The Conversion Narrative

WEEK TWO APRIL 10

The Russian Revolution on Film

Joseph Von Sternberg's *The Last Command*
Rasputin and the Empress and Hollywood's representation of the Romanovs
The Tempest and Hollywood's confusion about the Bolshevik Revolution
David Lean's *Doctor Zhivago* in literary and historical context: humanizing Russia
Warren Beatty's *Reds*: John Reed as left-wing American hero
Reception of Sergei Eisenstein's films in America: *Battleship Potemkin*, *October*

WEEK THREE April 17

Russian Emigres in the Film Business

Paths to Hollywood: the Moscow Art Theatre tours of USA
Doing Accents: The Unlikely Career of Akim Tamiroff
Maria Ouspenskaya: Playing Grandmothers and Gypsies; her teaching career

Michael Chekhov: Professor to the Stars, including Marilyn Monroe
 Anna Sten: “Goldwyn’s Folly,” The Star That Wasn’t
 Mischa Auer: “*Ochi chorynie*” and *My Man Godfrey*
 Yul Brynner: The Russian leading-man; *Anastasia* and other films
 Fyodor Chaliapin, Jr.: From *For Whom the Bell Tolls* to *Moonstruck*
 Rouben Mamoulian: A Russified Armenian, from *Silk Stockings* to *Cleopatra*
 Gregory Ratoff: The Fantastic Promoter

WEEK FOUR April 24

18th and 19th Century Russia in Hollywood Films

The Many Lives of *Anna Karenina* and Greta Garbo in Russian roles
 Marlene Dietrich as Catherine the Great in Von Sternberg’s *The Scarlet Empress*
 Henry Fonda and Audrey Hepburn in King Vidor’s *War and Peace*: “the least Russian movie ever made”
 Dostoyevsky in Hollywood: William Shatner in *The Brothers Karamazov* and Peter Lorre in *Crime and Punishment*
 Woody Allen takes on classic Russian literature: *Love and Death*

WEEK FIVE May 1

Prelude to the Cold War: US-Soviet Wartime Friendship in Hollywood and the Aftermath

President Roosevelt’s campaign to enlist Hollywood in the War effort
 Documentaries: *Why We Fight*; *The Battle of Russia*
 Ambassador Joseph Davies and the *Mission to Moscow* controversy
 Lillian Hellman, Sam Goldwyn and *The North Star*
Song of Russia and Tchaikovsky’s music in wartime propaganda
Days of Glory: protecting Russian culture
 Cold War Aftermath: HUAC attacks Hollywood for its pro-Soviet films; the Blacklist
 The Thaw: Nikita Khrushchev Comes to Hollywood
Dr.Strangelove: Stanley Kubrick satirizes the Cold War

WEEK SIX May 8

Two Russian-American directors in Hollywood and their Legacy

Lewis Milestone: From Kishinev to Hollywood

All Quiet on the Western Front: Hollywood’s first global success and the controversy it created in Germany

Of Mice and Men: John Steinbeck and Aaron Copland in Hollywood
 Milestone and the Blacklist: Anti-Russian Sentiment Engulfs Hollywood
Ocean’s Eleven and *Mutiny on the Bounty*: The Power of Celebrity

Anatole Litvak: Cosmopolitan Operative

Tovarich: Russian Aristocrats as Domestic Servants in Paris
Confessions of a Nazi Spy: Confronting the Fascist Threat
 Litvak Enlists and Travels to USSR
Anastasia: Nostalgia for the lost Tsarist world; Ingrid Bergman plays Russian
The Journey: Taking a stand against Soviet expansionism in Hungary

WEEK SEVEN **May 15**

Russian Music and Dancers in Hollywood: “Isn’t There Some Russian in Your Background?”

Music

Sergei Prokofiev: “Enjoying California” and Meeting Walt Disney

Igor Stravinsky finds a new home in Los Angeles; his flirtation with the movies

Fantasia: animating Stravinsky, Tchaikovsky and Musorgsky

Sergei Rachmaninoff: The Eternal Émigré and his Final Days in LA

Dmitri Tiomkin: A Ukrainian Émigré Makes Music for Westerns: *High Noon*

Tchaikovsky's Music in the Movies

Dancers

The Ballets Russes legacy and George Balanchine in Hollywood: *On Your Toes*

Tamara Toumanova in *Days of Glory* and *Tonight We Sing*

Red Danube: Janet Leigh as a ballerina torn between two worlds

Mikhail Baryshnikov's second career in film and TV: *The Turning Point*, *White Nights* and *Sex in the City*

Rudolf Nureyev on screen: *Valentino*

Silk Stockings: Fred Astaire converts Syd Charisse

Alexander Godunov plays Amish in *Witness*

WEEK EIGHT **May 22**

What Now? Hollywood Deals with Russia Under Reagan and in Post-Soviet Era

Red Dawn and the height of anti-Russian paranoia: “The Evil Empire”

The surprising Hollywood career of Andrei Konchalovsky: *Runaway Train* and other films

The evolution of the James Bond series and representation of Russians

The Hunt for Red October and *The Russia House*: Sean Connery plays both sides

The Americans: Russian Spies in Suburbia

The impact of the invasion of Ukraine on the Hollywood film industry

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Russians in Hollywood, Hollywood's Russians: Biography of an Image by Harlow Robinson. Northeastern University Press/University Press of New England, 2007. 314 pp.

Lewis Milestone: Life and Films by Harlow Robinson. University Press of Kentucky, 2019. 296 pp.

The Russians are Coming! The Russians Are Coming!: Pageantry and Patriotism in Cold-War America by Richard Fried. Oxford University Press, 1998.

An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood by Neal Gabler. Crown, 1988.

Running Time: Films of the Cold War by Nora Sayre. Dial, 1982.

Friend or Foe? Russians in American Film and Foreign Policy, 1933-1991 by Michael Strada and Harold Troper. Scarecrow Press, 1997.

SUGGESTED FILMS

<i>Ninotchka</i> (1939)	MGM	directed by Ernst Lubitsch
<i>Doctor Zhivago</i> (1965)	MGM	directed by David Lean
<i>The Scarlet Empress</i> (1934)	Paramount	directed by Josef von Sternberg
<i>Mission to Moscow</i> (1943)	Warner Bros	directed by Michael Curtiz
<i>The North Star</i> (1944)	Samuel Goldwyn/RKO	directed by Lewis Milestone
<i>Red Danube</i> (1950)	MGM	directed by George Sidney
<i>Anastasia</i> (1956)	20 th Century Fox	directed by Anatole Litvak
<i>Silk Stockings</i> (1957)	MGM	directed by Rouben Mamoulian
<i>From Russia With Love</i> (1963)	United Artists	directed by Terence Young
<i>The Russians Are Coming, The Russians Are Coming</i> (1966)	United Artists	directed by Norman Jewison
<i>Love and Death</i> (1975)	United Artists	directed by Woody Allen
<i>Reds</i> (1981)	Paramount	directed by Warren Beatty
<i>Red Dawn</i> (1984)	MGM	directed by John Milius
<i>Moscow on the Hudson</i> (1984)	Columbia	directed by Paul Mazursky
<i>White Nights</i> (1985)	Columbia	directed by Taylor Hackford
<i>The Hunt for Red October</i> (1990)	Paramount	directed by John McTiernan
<i>The Russia House</i> (1990)	MGM	directed by Fred Schepisi
<i>The Inner Circle</i> (1991)	Variety Distribution	directed by Andrei Konchalovsky